

Where Dragons Live

by Seeker of Inspiration

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Summary: SEQUEL to How To Find a Dragon. Hiccup and Astrid go on an unexpected journey when their son runs away towards an unknown land in the far west. They get involved in a war, learn about types of dragons, and more. Meanwhile in the present Hagnes, Chief of Berk has to host the Dragon Council. It all comes to a decision that could change the whole world. Rating may change.

1. Chapter 1

Do not read unless you have already read HOW TO FIND A DRAGON.

I don't own How to Train Your Dragon.

Hey guys, here is the first chapter of WHERE DRAGONS LIVE. I hope you enjoy it.

Chapter 1

In the northern sky, there is a constellation called Draco, which is Latin for Dragon. This constellation has drawn humans into dreaming about incredible creatures and adventures. This very same constellation has watched over them as well, but Draco does not need to dream for as what it saw were the true tales of men and women from the old and new times. Looking down it never missed watching over a small island that had caught its attention a long time ago. It shone like a lonely star in the infinite sky.

**** PAST****

Hiccup had always felt as if he had some of the worst luck in the world, but this time he couldn't believe Thor was being serious. Of all times to throw him a thunderstorm this was unquestionably the worst. Hiccup tried to go around it, but the storm itself moved with him and towards him. At the end, he had to return to Berk. He was

seriously tempted just to cut through the storm, but then remembered it hadn't felt nice at all when he got hit by lighting when he was younger. Now, he realized his own son had inherited that craziness from him. Astrid had been much more level headed of the two. How many years had it already been? He realized he was his father's age when they first started riding dragons. He suddenly felt terribly old.

At home, he washed his face in a basin Astrid had left for him in their room. When clean he looked into the surface and saw his reflection. His hair was about the same as when he was younger. Only once a long time ago he tried to grow his hairâ€œ; he knew he had been young back then, but never again did he want someone to confuse him with a woman. Some of the ends in the back were actually braided by his wife. He had his goatee and much more recently added chin strap. He hated that he could never grow a full beard like his dad, but none the less everyone complimented the well shaped chin strap. Maybe, he should crop it a littleâ€œ;

Waitâ€œ; he leaned closer into the waterâ€œ;

"Astrid!" he shouted before his wife rushed into the room.

"What is it?" she asked with an axe in hand looking for an attacker.

He rushed to her before tilting his head back and pointing to a spot on his goatee, "is that a grey hair?"

"You know how we could get rid of it?" asked Astrid innocently, though she tightened her hold on her axe handle.

"How?" he asked with eyes filled with worry.

"If we cut your whole head off!" she shouted making him stumble back, "there's nothing there Hiccup so don't get all middle age crisis on me"

"Really?" he asked.

"Really," she said but made a mental note to pull out the grey hair out when he fell asleep, "come on, dinner is ready"

Halla already sat at the table, and Hiccup could see she was trying to hold her laughter in check. She had heard them all the way from the kitchen.

"The storm should let up soon," Astrid said as they sat around the dinner table, "I will go with you"

"I want to go too!" said Halla hoping for a chance to see if they would reach Shikoba's land.

"Actually, I need you to stay," said Hiccup, "Gobber needs some help at the smithy and with your brother goneâ€œ;"

Halla didn't say anything but both parents could tell she was not happy with the decision.

"You won't run after us, will you?" asked Astrid knowing her daughter well.

"I might," she said looking to the side. She was already making a list of things she would take with her.

Hiccup leaned forwards to take her small chin on his fingers before making her turn to look at him.

"I really need your help with this Halla," he said, "I promise you I will repay you for it"

"Would you teach me how to ride Toothless?" she asked.

Okay, he did not expect that, "okay. I will" he said leaning back to his chair

"Alright!" she shouted with a large grin. Both parents had a rather bad feeling about it, "Toothless you are mine!" she said to the dragon eating by the hearth.

Said dragon looked at her in shock before turning to glare at his rider with an expression that said 'what were you thinking?'

Hiccup offered a nervous smile back 'I have no idea'.

Even after dinner the thunderstorm kept going outside. He knew he would be able to catch up to Stein and Shikoba with Toothless if the storm didn't erase the whole trace.

"Sleep," said his wife as she snuggled closer to him. He wrapped his arms around her molding her into his body. He started to draw small circles on her back as he got lost in his thoughts again. He wondered if Odin wanted his son to follow Shikoba to his land. Slowly he drifted off into a worried sleep. He dreamt of a sheep trying to eat his goatee.

**** Very far away from Berk ****

"This is so awesome!" Stein shouted over the wind.

"Your mother will kill you," said Shikoba shaking his head, though he too was smiling.

"So be it!" Stein couldn't believe they had flown through a thunderstorm. He shouted at the top of his lungs. Shikoba soon followed him.

The two young men could see nothing but the sea, and they were being simply led by Pachua in the day and the stars in the night. They had no idea how long it would take them to reach Shikoba's land, but it couldn't be that long, right?

That thought kept ramming into their minds. Stein had been taught there was nothing but death towards the west. Only the great spawn Loki had given the world to eat and destroy the world sometime was supposed to be there. Yet, if Shikoba was actually from the west, from that vast land he had told him about, then he would be the first Viking to see it.

**** Hiccup & Astrid****

"We are almost out of water," she told him as they flew side to side.

Hiccup nodded with worry. It had almost been week since they had taken off in search of their son and Shikoba. If they had run out of supplies, they should have already turned back.

"We are not turning back, are we?" she asked.

"Not without Stein,"

"Good, he will wish he was never born when I get my hands on him"

"Not before me," said Hiccup before he caught the incredulous look his wife was giving him, "what? My back is killing me, and it isn't as if I can get up to walk on Toothless' back like you do on Stormfly's"

"Want me to ride him?" she asked, but she had already jumped into the black dragon's back.

"Knock yourself out," he said before they switched places, "Argh! I can't feel my leg!" he said, before he rubbed the appendage to return some feeling to it, "it's my fault, isn't?" he said with derision.

"You will have to be more specific," said Astrid with a smile, she couldn't help teasing him.

"That Stein decided to do this," he sighed, "I should have been more strict with him"

"Like your father tried to be with you? That would have worked so well," she said not bothering to keep the sarcasm out of her tone.

"Stein is nothing like I was," Hiccup said with a sigh.

"He is trying to do what he believes right," she told him shifting her body to look at him, "he learnt that from you"

"And that did so much good," he said thinking of Lugus.

"Stop beating yourself over that," she told him, "what is done, is done"

"I know, I know!" he said before he tried to stand on Toothless back, "I just can't stand the idea of him getting hurt"

"What did your father used to say?"

"We are Vikings, it's a professional hazard," he couldn't help rolling his eyes. It was now a family saying.

"Right," said Astrid with a sharp nod, "and Stein knows this as well as you and everyone else back home"

"Butâ€| "

"No buts," she said, "I am as worried as you Hiccup, but I also trust him"

Hiccup was at loss of how to respond to her. Since Stein had told him he didn't want to become the next chief, he hadn't felt sure he knew his son that well anymore. It was truly like the gap between his father and he. No matter how much they tried, there was always something in between them; their stubbornness probably, the same one that Stein had.

"How is your leg?" she asked after a long silence. She didn't like him brooding on his thoughts for too long.

"Better," he said as he sat with his back against hers.

"You must trust him," she told him hoping he remembered that his father didn't always trust him to do the right thing. Not too many did anymore, but she still remembered when he had just been a boy known as Hiccup the Useless.

****PRESENT ****

Some days it felt as if it had been just the day before, and others as if it had been a life away. When she opened her eyes that morning and felt strong arms around her, she felt it was one of those days where the past seemed so far away. She couldn't believe it had been four years since they defeated the White Death.

"It's too early," Ashton tightened his hold on her when he felt her move.

She leaned her forehead against his chest and closed her eyes. The scent of their love making was still attached to their skins. In that moment, she wished they could stay like that for always, but as the sun started to rise and its warmth invade the room she knew they would have to part. She had to get to an early meeting with the council, and he had to look over the patrols around the island. If they were lucky they would get to eat lunch together, but for sure they would share dinner in her house and then go for a ride with their dragons.

"Hagnes?" she heard her mother knock on her door, "we are going to be late"

"I will catch up!" she shouted back as she held a hand over Ashton's smiling mouth.

"See you there then," and then they listened to her go down the steps.

"Ugh! You licked me," she whispered harshly at her boyfriend before cleaning hand on his shoulder

"Couldn't help myself," he said before he pushed her down against the mattress with a smug smile, "don't you think your mom already realized I stay here just about every other night?"

"Yes," she rolled her eyes, "but we don't need to make it awkward, now do we?" she pushed him off her before she stood up.

Ashton laid back and watched her go towards her bathroom. The burn scars on the right side of her body had gone from an angry pink to a more mocha tone. She no longer hid her body from him, and he was thankful for that. He loved her just as she was.

"Are you staring at my ass?" she asked when she reached the bathroom door.

"Yes I am" he said before getting up. She hurried to open the door to her bathroom and then rushed in closely followed by him. She was going to be so late.

**** The Council****

She made it to the council just as the breakfast was being served. After the council noticed her mother and her skipped breakfast, they made it a rule to have one there. She brushed her short hair back and offered a sheepish smile. Though she was the Chief, she was still the youngest in the whole room.

"Morning everyone," she said walking around the table. Some faces she had known since she was a child while others she had only seen glimpses of until a few years ago.

"Morning Chief,"

"Morning Ms. Haddock"

"Hagnes," said Anna, the oldest of the members of the council, and also head of education. She used to be Hagnes favorite literature teacher "Who exactly is this Dragon Council we heard about?"

"Yes, especially if you have called us here so early in the morning without an audience" another member said before they looked at the seats above them. Usually council meetings were held in public, but not this one as ordered by the young chief.

"So I guess we will eat and talk," she said taking the seat next to her mother.

She remembered when all she would worry about was getting by without being pushed or made fun of at school.

"The High Dragon Council," she said resignedly, "it's a long story"

Things were much simpler before, but she guessed they had also been a lot lonelier too.

"The High Dragon Council? I thought they were no more," said Gunnur. She was an old friend of the family, head of the Berk Museum, and director of the Dragon awareness program.

"So did I," she said before speaking to the whole council, "It's a committee formed by tribes from all over the world who are involved with dragons. Centuries ago, their main function was to advise each other regarding matters relating to the dragons. If they should be used for war, or how involved they should get with others that didn't have dragons, or how to breathe them, treat them and so on. They also passed general rules. One of them was that they would keep themselves

apart from the rest of the world, just like we used to three hundred years ago"

"Do you think they are upset?" one member asked. They were one _tribe_ surely they had many more dragons than them.

"It wasn't like we could seriously keep it quiet when the White Death woke up" Gunnur reminded them. No government was able to control everything, especially those considered natural disasters.

"Or when the dragons started waking up," Steinunn said.

"Are they dangerous?" someone asked

"I truly have no idea," Hagnes said, "the High Dragon Council used to be remarkably peaceful three hundred years ago, but they could have changed. Our tribe was of those that reinforced peaceful approaches. Our absence could have changed things quite a bit"

"What about the young man you captured, has he said anything?"

"Not much," she said with a slight frown before she attacked a slice of grapefruit, "he said his task was to deliver the message and the medallion, and from there just wait for the Dragon Council to arrive"

"What if we threaten to feed him to the dragons, he might talk then" said Gunnur with a grin.

"Gunnur!" Steinunn reprimanded her friend.

"What? Maybe he doesn't know our dragons don't like the taste of humans"

"He is familiar with dragons because he is from the Nahuan tribe," she told them, "their dragons are as big as ours, though slower, and they don't breathe fire"

"So we are not entirely helpless. We do have some information on them"

Before Hagnes could answer Gunnur's laughter thundered around them, "that's an understatement!" she said before pressing her lips to hold her laughter, "Every single dragon that the Chiefs of this island have seen since a thousand years ago have been studied and categorized into our Dragon Manuals, the existing seven volumes! Hagnes has read them all and can tell you exactly what we would be facing, isn't that right birdie?"

"We are not going to war just yet," she said fast, "we will meet them and see what they want"

****PAST ***

It was the beginning of a new day, and also the beginning of an adventure. Stein only felt excitement as they spotted land not too far ahead. He could hear the wild life ahead as they neared, also feel increasing heat. He understood why Shikoba wore so little when they found him. He started shedding some of his clothes and at once felt refreshed. Finally, they landed on a beautiful the beach.

"Oh land! I missed you so much!" cried Stein as he jumped off Ormarr's back and threw himself on the ground. He had already lost count of the days they had been flying without stop.

Shikoba only shook his head in disbelief. He had missed the earth too, but he had missed his family and tribe even more. At once, he started on an old path his father, and his father before him had carved on the earth every summer with their steps. He couldn't help to show Nita the Pachua he now rode. Hopefully like this they would be able to keep any invaders from approaching them. Pachua's were guardians of nature, and known to be powerful. No man ever dared to go against them.

"It's so warm, how can you stand it?" Stein asked as they went through the old trail. The dragons followed close behind.

"Your home is too cold," Shikoba said congratulating himself on saying that correctly. He had been practicing with Stein all the way there as they had little to do while flying.

"You bet is cold!" laughed Stein, though he was too proud to admit he wouldn't mind a few more warmer days, "Berk is like no other"

"Thank the gods for that,"

The boys laughed before a scent caught their attention. Stein knew the scent quite well from the battles they had been fighting quite a few months ago, but it was too strong. His hand went immediately to the hilt of his sword in instinct. Shikoba didn't think twice and ran in the direction he knew well his home was towards. He could hear Stein calling after him as he and the dragons followed but at that moment nothing could stop him. When he broke into where his tribe used to be, he only saw grey ashes.

Stein didn't know what to do as he watched his friend crumble to his knees as he held his head with both hands and screamed his heart out. The sight was atrocious as much as the smell. The scent of burned flesh was overpowering.

"No! No! No!" screamed Shikoba as he dug his hands into the earth mixed with cold ashes, their homes were entirely gone, but there were stumps that were unmistakably once living breathing humans "no!"

Then a shadow covered him. He looked up and saw the Pachua shielding his view with its long snake like body and colorful wings as if trying to protect him from further pain. The dragon leaned forwards and created a cocoon around the young man just as a sob escaped his throat.

Stein sat against a tree as he tried to regain his breath. Ormarr crooned worriedly next to him. It was only until later that the Pachua released Shikoba. Stein watched as his friend took a shaky breath before walking into the dead tribe. He followed his memory and walked towards where he once knew his home had been. The grey ashes started to stick to him. He didn't even reach his home before he found his mother on the ground, face down and burnt almost beyond recognition. Her clothes were charred, but he could recognize her earrings which had blue feathers on them. He was the one to give them

to her. He kneeled before her ready to turn her around before a hand stopped him. He looked up at a pale looking Stein who shook his head no.

"Let's give them a proper funeral," he said before he helped his friend to his feet. Though Shikoba was taller than him, he couldn't help to feel the man had shrunk.

Shikoba led him to a field where Stein noted several mounds of earth. At once the young man started to dig, the Pachua followed before Stein and Ormarr started to help. Once the first were ready the two young men started to pull the bodies towards their graves.

"His name was Isi, we were friends, but he liked to hunt alone," he said as the laid a young man about their age into one of them. Though badly burn, they were able to tell he had deep cuts in his body, "he was a brave warrior. I am sorry we can't give him the proper burial"

Stein was about to ask him, but the pain his friend showed kept him from doing so. He knew remarkably little of how they did things in Shikoba's land, but he guessed it wouldn't make his friend feel better to tell him. They carried more bodies as the dragons worked on the graves. Some they had to place on a blanket that survived the fire; otherwise they would fall apart when they picked them up.

"Her name was Fala," he said as they lay to rest an old woman, "she was a healer, and a teacher. She taught all children about good and wicked herbs"

Stein reached Shikoba's mother first. He wrapped her body neatly before Shikoba made it to him. He didn't say anything as he started to shed tears. He knew he would be bawling if it was him in his place. Stein realized then that he missed his mother and family terribly.

"_Nitaâ€|_" Stein watched him as he picked the body of a woman. He noticed a resemblance, "she was my sister"

Stein froze, and for a moment he saw in the back of his mind Halla smiling innocently at him.

"_Oh sisterâ€|_" Shikoba cradled her against his chest, staining it grey. His dear older sister was gone. He couldn't believe it. She who always made sure he didn't slack, but also helped him whenever she could. Even after her baby was born she still went to check on him. The baby... _"Choctaw," _he said before he started looking around, "Stein! Do you see a baby?"

"Nâ€|no," he said before he too looked around. He had seen children but no babies among the bodies.

Shikoba placed Nita's body down before he went to where her home used to be a searched the ashes. When nothing he went to check other remains. He remembered there had been least four babies in the tribe when he left, but none were to be found.

"Do you think they took them?" Stein asked him, though he didn't know who _they _were. The night started to draw around them.

Shikopa didn't answer because at that moment, he found something. He raised it to the light of the setting sun and traced the neat black feather attached to the end of an arrow. The feather was not of a nearby bird, but he had seen it before when he was a child.

"Shikopa! Wait!" Stein shouted as he followed his friend who carried the body of his sister to a newly dug grave.

"_I will find him Nita_," he said as he reached the grave, "_I promise you_"

Then he mounted Pucha. The feathered serpent was able to read at once what the boy wanted, so it took off towards the direction he wanted. Stein followed close behind, wondering if his father was close to reaching them. He hoped he was because he didn't know what to do for exception of following Shikopa.

*****PRESENT*****

Hagnes stood in the port as the ship started to close on their island. Kara crooned softly before nudging the hand of her rider. Hagnes patted her gently, but her eyes never left the ship. It was a week too early for them to arrive. She didn't like it at all. Around, volunteers stood guard waiting for the boat's arrival. Among them were her friends. She could see right away they were excited at the prospect of seeing the dragons of other lands. She admitted to herself she too was excited. As the ship came closer, she finally recognized the flag. It was a tribe that lived not that far away from them.

"The Anglii," she said at once thinking of the dragons that grew in their island. They came from an island close to Northern England and Ireland. They learnt to ride from an explorer from their tribe that settled there after a hundred years from Hiccup's time. That was how far the story went before the bloodshed started. When she saw the large cargo ship arrive her whole body tensed. The Berkerians and The Angliis still crashed in opinions back three hundred years ago, at times simply out of spite for each other. They shared a history that she was not proud of.

"Here he is," she heard Ashton say before he dragged Carlos, the messenger to stand before her, "explain yourself. Why are they here?"

"The Angliis?" he said in a curious tone, "no idea, though I suspect they want to gain your favor before anyone else. The others won't be happy about this"

"What do you mean?" she asked, but he only smiled smugly at her, "speak!"

"You got nothing to worry about Chief," he said, and Hagnes caught a hint of bitterness on his voice, "they all want you on their favor"

She didn't like the sound of that, "Ashton, come with me" she said before they got on their dragons, leaving Carlos in the care of Runi and Runa. They landed on the deck of the ship where at once at least a dozen guns were pointed at them. All of the men wore dark marine

suits. They didn't match any coastal guard uniform that she knew of. Both Ashton and she stood their ground.

"Put your weapons down," she heard a male voice before the men did and then they parted to let him pass. A man almost six feet tall made his way to them followed by a boy of about ten years. The man had light brown hair, hazel eyes, and remarkably light skin even in comparison to the people of Berk who lived farther north. He seemed to be in his mid thirties. They were able to tell right away the boy was his son as he had the same characteristics, for exception of his height and the surprised look he kept on Hagnes as they approached.

"Are you the chief of the Angliai?" she kept her tone firm as she regarded both analytically. She was glad that Carlos had at least slipped on telling her that the Dragon Council communicated mainly in English.

"Yes, my name is Oliver Miller. Is a pleasure finally to meet the legend in the flesh," he offered her a charming smile before extending his hand towards her. She got off Kara, followed closely by Ashton and went to shake hands with him.

"I wish I could say the same," she felt his grip falter, "Why are you here earlier than accorded?"

"For two simple reasons," he said with a spark in his eyes. Hagnes didn't like it at all; "The first to assist you with the preparations as the rest of the Dragon Council will have certain expectations regarding their welcoming and the secondâ€œ!" he stood to the side so they could see the boy who had been hiding behind his father, "so that my son Daniel finally got to meet you. He is a big admirer of yours"

The boy opened his mouth to say something, and then closed it before turning an intriguing shade of red.

"It's an honor to meet you Daniel," Hagnes said leaning down and stretched her hand forwards. He looked at her hand as if he had never seen one before clasping it with all his strength. Hagnes couldn't help to smile a little.

"Theâ€œ the honor is all miâ€œ mine," he said before he was caught by her green eyes.

"What do you mean by expectations?" Ashton said as Hagnes stood next to him again.

"And you are?" Oliver asked, trying and failing awfully at hiding his displeasure at being addressed by a man he didn't consider to be in his level.

Hagnes gave him a frosty look. At once, Oliver understood that he was meant to treat the man like an equal.

"Ashton Hofferson," he said with a sly smile, "I am part of Berk's security team, I need to know what you meant by expectations"

"We understand the tribe of Berk hasn't had been part of a meeting in about three hundred years, and as the chosen hostâ€œ!" Hagnes raised

an eyebrow at hearing this, "I imagined that some assistance would be welcomed"

Hagnes had some basic ideas of what was expected at the meetings from the old records her family had kept, but she knew some things must have changed since then. She was for a moment in debate with herself as of what to do.

"We need more details," Hagnes told him before noting the sun was starting to set, "tomorrow morning we will talk" she said before she mounted Kara, "I will ask that neither you nor your crew leave the ship in the meanwhile. If you need anything, let the guards know. Good evening" and then she and Ashton took off not bothering to wait for a response.

"Father?" asked Daniel. He knew well his father hated to be told what to do.

"You heard the lady son;" he did his best to keep his temper in control "tomorrow we will talk"

When Oliver reached his room in the ship, he didn't waste a moment and made a call.

"She won't be easy to convince," he said over the phone, "we might have to resort to more underhanded methods"

***** To Be Continued *****

PLEASE REVIEW + FAVE + FOLLOW

2. Chapter 2

Do not read unless you have already read HOW TO FIND A DRAGON.

I don't own How to Train Your Dragon.

Chapter 2

Berk was an incredible place. In winter, it was deadly cold and unforgiving, but in summer it was beautiful. The sight of dragons in the ever blue sky just about every hour made it seem like out of a fairy book. That, plus the crystal like dome being built around the whole town made it look eerie beautiful. He wasn't sure how the Berkarians were able to afford it, and in reality he didn't want to know. If he did, he would be required to report it. He imagined how that would turn out; not good at all.

Besides having a beautiful island, they also had a beautiful and incredible leader. The way she strode into her office radiated confidence and strength. Though she was small compared to most, she behaved in the opposite way. Carlos admired that, and because of that when she spoke to him he made sure to listen. His own chief had trouble making him do that.

"What do they want" she sat across from him on the comfy chair behind her desk. Standing at her side was Ashton, his personal guard as he liked to think. Whenever he wasn't locked away in the small room, the guy looked after him with a scowl. The only times he had seen Ashton

smile was when he thought he wasn't watching, and he was with the chief. It took him remarkably little to realize they were more than just friends.

"I don't know," he said sincerely, "I only know that they want your say on something, and everyone will look for a way to get you on their side"

"And you don't know what it isâ€|" she said more to herself than to him. He could see the gears of her mind turning through her bright green eyes. According to the information the other tribes had been able to gather the past few years Hagnes was beyond smart. He didn't see why they would be surprised by that. He had heard stories of her family as a child, and she seemed to fit the picture perfectly.

"What do you know about the previous meetings?" she asked him. She probably would have to wait to know what they had to say, but at least she wouldn't place herself at the mercy of the Anglii.

"They happen every ten years," he said tiredly. He knew they wouldn't let him go until he gave them something.

"I already knew that," she said, though she had forgotten about it.

"They bring with them only their most trusted subjects and family," he said, and both noticed he was doing his best to keep a sardonic smile from spreading across his lips.

"Subjectsâ€|" Ashton echoed with a bitter taste on his mouth. Hagnes was their chief, and they were supposed to be subjects, but never did she ever talk to them like so. From her frown, he could tell Hagnes already didn't like most of the council.

"I have never been at one," he admitted, "but from what I heard there are competitions and some of the participants never come back"

"You don't know what type of events?" that picked her interest; anything involving unnecessary death, specially involving those under her care mattered.

"No, but I believe some include the dragons while others only include the riders," he said the word riders like a title. Ashton wondered what that actually meant to them. Just about everyone in Berk who was sixteen or over rode dragons.

Hagnes knew there were games played in the past, and yes, there was some competition, but not deaths if they could help it.

"There is suppose to be a feast as well, though I heard is more like a competition for insulting each other in a polite way" he rolled his eyes, something the other two wanted to do badly. Since High School, they had grown tired and bored of social competitions. It was weird, but as they truly became adults they realized they had more serious matter to worry about.

Hagnes only responded with a nod, she expected as much. What was it with people trying to outdo each other in everything just for the sake of being better than others? Couldn't they do it for the

wellbeing of others, or for their own at least? Could she skip the whole thing and go on a vacation instead? By looking at Carlos healthy tan, she could bet he could recommend a decent place.

"Besides that, I don't know more," he said tiredly. He hoped they had enough to let him finally get some shut eye.

"Take him back to his room, I will go talk to the council" she told Ashton before he grabbed Carlos by the collar of his shirt and dragged him out of her office.

Ashton didn't like Carlos at all. He didn't like the way he looked or talked to Hagnes, or how at ease he behaved around their dragons. None ever scared him, and he actually knew how to treat them well. He couldn't help to feel he was only there to spy and shouldn't be let out at all.

"I bet she has a lot of admirers," and what he hated the most was when he tried to make small talk, "I think you two could make a rather lovely couple"

"I don't want to hear it"

"Really? You aren't interested on her at all? Wow, that's great. Then maybe I canâ€¢!"

"You finish that sentence, and you will be surviving on bread and water only"

"I am just teasing. I have noticed the way she looks at you" he said faking disappointment, "I bet she is the romantic type underneath that strong exterior, isn't she?" in response he only got a warning glare, "alright, I won't even think her name"

Ashton hated that he couldn't ride Fire Hearth when he guarded Carlos. So they had to walk, and he had to listen to his pointless banter. When they finally made it to the new apartments, he sighed with relief when he spotted Conall Walsh returning from getting some dinner. He was Carlos usual assigned guard.

"Hey Ashman, I see you brought my buddy back," he said before clapping Carlos on the back with a smile, "How are they treating you?"

"Like a war criminal," said Carlos returning the smile.

"See that he behaves and if he talks about Hagnesâ€¢!"

"He knows that subject is forbidden with me, right Charlie?" Conall punched him lightly on the shoulder.

"He made it quite clear," Carlos said rubbing his jaw.

"You hit him? Why didn't you say anything?" the last thing he actually wanted was the guy being mistreated. Conall was stronger than him; he used to be the captain of their High School football team.

Carlos shrugged; he thought he deserved it the way everyone placed

Hagnes in a pedestal.

"Next time leave him to me," he said with a tired sigh. He knew Conall no longer had feelings for Hagnes but those of respect and of an old friend, but at times he wondered if he ever would return to chase after her. Not that he was worried, but it would be rather awkward.

"Will do lover boy," Conall said before leading Carlos inside. He could hear them talk about a game of cards they had left off as a tie earlier that day. Did anyone know the meaning of loyalty anymore? He sighed once more before he spotted a rather familiar Nightmare descending.

"Hey Soleil," he said before he spotted Fire Heart following close behind, "how did he behave?"

"As always, fidgety," she said patting Princess, her Nightmare with pride.

"Sorry, he is not used to be groomed by others," he said before his Nadder went to him for a scratch.

"Any news?" she asked him with small frown. She believed it was never too early to worry about expression lines. It was hard to believe she was Hagnes's cousin.

"Not much really," he said as he mounted Fire Heart, "it seems they have this idea that she accepted becoming part of their council"

"What is she going to do?"

"She hasn't told me," and they rode on silence for a while.

"She tells you everything," Soleil said, "doesn't she?"

He felt a knot on his throat. Over the past few years, he had heard people call him names behind his back because of his relation with Hagnes. Some were as simple as lover boy or lapdog, others were just too crude, but he never said anything about it. He didn't want Hagnes to think they bothered him.

"I don't think she is even sure of what she wants to do," he finally spoke drily.

"I guess we will have to wait and see," she sighed before they flew to the center of town.

**** PAST ****

Hiccup was in an old nightmare, but when Astrid placed a hand on his shoulder he knew it wasn't a nightmare. Reality was laid naked before him reminding him of the time he almost lost everything. The ashes of what used to be a tribe were exposed to them in that warm land. They had arrived only a while ago as the moon came up, where the dragons caught the fresh scent of their son they followed it there.

"There are fresh footprints," Astrid said before they followed them.

As they made their way, they saw some of the bodies were moved. Both held their breaths when they caught sight of the corpses of the very young. Whoever attacked them had no mercy whatsoever. They felt like they did almost twenty years ago when they were out of a home and exposed to the elements. The fear that had been running through them back all those years ago ran again through their skins. When they reached the mounds of earth they knew it was the boys' doing.

"I don't think Stein has ever seen so many dead," Astrid knew that no matter how old one was, seeing that many dead could never be easy.

"Let's find a place to sleep, tomorrow we will catch up to them" Hiccup said before they mounted their dragons and left the lifeless tribe.

Astrid knew they could catch up to them right away, but the look in his eyes said he needed some time to digest what he had just seen. Neither of them was innocent of ever killing, but it was something else when those that killed didn't have any regard for the young or old. Not too far they found a river where they took off some of their clothing and set them in the water to wash.

"I think we shouldn't wear so much while here," she said as she washed her hair with some herbs she found were rather pleasant in scent, "this place is very warm"

Hiccup simply nodded as he sat on a boulder and washed his shoulders and chest. Under the light of the moon, she couldn't help to stare. Though they were already in their forties, he could pass as a man in his thirties with his light form and short beard which she knew he would trim in the morning. She didn't bother in dwelling on how much she had changed over the years, especially after giving birth twice. She liked the fact that she was still strong, her hair pure blonde, and her shape still somewhat light. Age hadn't changed them that much yet, and she hoped it wouldn't any time soon.

She climbed to the boulder with him when she finished with her hair. She took the cloth he had been using to wash his chest before she started with his back. She placed her hand on his back when he let a shaky breath go.

"I am fine," he said and even though she knew he actually wasn't she didn't say anything. She continued to clean his back before helping with his hair. She was pretty sure that in his current state, he wouldn't do a decent job of washing it. She knew he had been shaken by what they had seen more than her. All the previous times they had seen a village in ashes it had been theirs. She remembered the young man that came back covered in ashes all those years ago ready to be the chief of their tribe. He had been more scared than anyone else, but he had stood up when he was needed.

"Do you remember the time when we tried to teach the dragons to sing?" she asked him before he turned to look at her with curiosity.

"Only because the Nadders kept waking everyone up in the morning" he said before she pulled on his hair making him yelp, "Now I remember; all the dragons, right"

"Dragons are good for many things, but never for singing" she laughed softly, "Toothless only screeched"

"Everyone would shout 'Nightfury! Get down!' right? It was fun to watch everyone scramble for a place to hide" it was wonderful to hear him laugh, though she could tell he was trying to cheer her up as much as she was trying to cheer him.

Nearby Toothless woke up at hearing his name. He had been sleeping next to Stormfly on another boulder nearby. He watched from his place as Astrid washed Hiccup and laughed together as they talked about the old times. Though he wanted to show them that his singing had improved he didn't interrupt them. He knew they needed to laugh, or at least try to forget what they had seen not too long ago.

He watched silently as they slipped into the river and splashed each other there. It reminded him of a summer day many years ago back in the old village. He was sure they remembered it too. As she fell at top of him and into the water, he remembered that it had happened just like that years ago too. However, this time they didn't blush nor scramble back from each other. This time they kissed and whatever else happened after he didn't bother to see. Last time Hiccup had caught him picking he had been made to sleep at Fishlegs' house. That man had poked him, measured him, and worst; talked to him trying to get an emotional response for endless hours. Yeah, he didn't care for their mating rituals anymore.

**** Following Day ****

Stein dipped his whole body in the water and scrubbed at the sweat, ashes, and more sweat on his tired and sore body. He had almost fallen off Ormarr when he almost fell asleep on his back. Shikoba realized he too was tired at the time and finally said they should set camp. As he emerged from the lake they had found he caught the scent of food being cooked. He saw Shikoba had caught some rabbits that were now being toasted by a fire they had started before.

"We should be able to catch up to them today," Stein said when Shikoba didn't say anything but stared deeply into the flames, "so what's the plan?"

"Plan?" he asked as Stein sat across from him. The fire burned fiercely in the middle.

"Yeah, when we find them?" Stein asked as he grabbed one of the rabbits.

"We kill them and take Choctaw back with us," Shikoba said as he plunged his dagger into the earth.

"Okayâ€| that doesn't sound like much of a plan to me. We don't even know how many there are"

"We have the dragons with us, what does it matter?" he said pulling it out before glancing at their dragons that were sharing their fair share of meat.

"It matters a lot," Stein said with a frown, "you never overestimate an enemy"

"You sound just like your father" Shikoba knew Stein felt his father didn't take enough actions, and he agreed with him.

"So what? It doesn't mean we shouldn't be careful. What if they use Choctaw as a hostage, or if they took other babies from your tribe or others. We are not going to burn down their whole camp without actually knowing" Stein took a deep breath. He really did sound like his father.

"I didn't ask you to come with me on this. I will do as I want and you can go back to your cold island in the middle of nowhere" and though he knew he was being stupid, he couldn't help the words coming out of his mouth. He knew Stein was right, but the idea of Choctaw being hurt made him so mad he lost part of his rationality.

"I know you didn't ask me to come here," Stein said, "but I am not going to leave you to deal with this on your own. You are my friend, like it or not" he stood up with his meal and walked away to his dragon.

Shikoba wanted to shout at him, and also thank him. He really didn't know what to do, but trusted Stein to help him think it thoroughly.

Soon they were in the air once again following the trace those who had killed his tribe. Just as they thought they were getting close they spotted another tribe that had been burned entirely. When they descended to have a better idea of how far they were from their target they spotted among the ashes a young woman. She lay on the ashes, eyes open wide and looking up into the sky. A stream of tears ran down her face as she silently waited for her death.

"_What happened?"_ Shikoba asked her, though he didn't expect an answer so soon.

When she spoke; she did with a dry and tired voice _"The smell of smoke woke me up, my father made me go to the forest and hide. I got lost, I don't know for how long but when I got backâ€|"_

Shikoba told Stein of what she had said and was ready at once to continue after them.

"Wait, what about her?" Stein asked, looking at the young woman with worry. She was maybe their age or a little older. It was hard to tell as she was covered entirely by ashes.

"What about her?" Shikoba responded tiredly knowing well what he was going to say.

"Are we just going to leave her here, alone?"

"If we bring her with us she will justâ€|"

"_Who are you talking to?" _she asked sitting up, and for the first time she spotted Stein. She frowned, not remembering seeing a man like him before. However, what impressed her more were the beasts they were riding. One she could recognize was a Pachua, but the one the pale man was riding was something she had never seen.

"_Can you fight?" _Shikoba asked her after some more discussing with Stein.

"_Yes,"_ in reality, she had only watched her brother practice, but she was okay with the bow and arrow.

"_Then get behind me, we are going to make them pay"_ the girl mounted without a word before they took off. She didn't understand what was fully happening, but the idea of revenge sounded rather alluring at the time, or at least better than dying out there on her own.

*****PRESENT*****

Her head was pounding after the meeting with the council. They couldn't make up their minds if she should allow Oliver Miller to help her set up things before the Dragon Council. At the end, they were all speaking over each other, and she had to calm them down and then tell them she would listen to him, but if anything seemed out of line she would refuse to do it. There had been shouting after that, but she refused to listen to further arguing and dismissed them. She saw a few give her resented looks. She had never dismissed them until they had agreed on something, and the feeling was quite heavy on her chest. She had never felt alone as a chief until then. The council and her mother were always there to advise her.

"And you didn't punch anyone?" Runa said as she brought her a mug of beer.

There were a few snickers around their table, all for exception of Soleil. She knew her cousin could pack a mighty punch if she was upset enough. Her front teeth had never been the same since then.

"I wanted to, but no" she said smiling for the first time that night, "what do you guys think of this whole thing?"

"I wouldn't trust any of them one bit," said Runi with drunken smile, "that guy Carlos is a flirt, and I bet that Miller is a pompous bastard from what Ashton told me. Why would the rest of them be any better?"

"Well, I think we should give them a chance," said Philly taking little sips of her mug, "I have been reading on their history. We used to get along with many of them, and helped each other out in the past"

"But that was three hundred years ago," Ashton said next to Hagnes, "whatever alliances we had with them all those years ago probably mean squat for them now"

"We don't know that for sure," said Philly surprised that her cousin wasn't agreeing on this one with her.

"Hagnes, this is killing the mood," said Soleil tiredly, "can we talk about something else?"

"Sorry," she said with a sheepish smile, "alright, what should we do next?"

"We are going to get drunk until everyone starts to look pretty,"

said Runa.

"And then a lucky gal or guy" Runi said looking at the ladies at the table, "will take us to their cozy homes and do nasty things to us"

Philly giggled while Runa and Soleil smiled like she-devils. Hagnes only could give them a half serious look. It probably would be the last time they got together for some fun until the whole Dragon Council thing ended.

"Oh, don't look at us like that," said Runa, "alright guys, change of plans"

"But I don'tâ€| Ouch!" Runi cried out when his sister elbowed him in the ribs.

"Is there anything you want to do?" Philly asked her.

"Before you take off with Ashton to have some nastyâ€|Ouch!" this time the elbow came from Ashton.

"I have an idea," she said with a light blush on her face. Everyone became curious at once.

*** Later that night ***

Four years, four incredible busy and extraordinary years with her friends, and she was back to the place where all started. The woods were silent, all for exception of their little party.

"Let me goooo!" Hagnes cried out before she was thrown into the pond.

"Your turn!" shouted Runi before pushing his sister too.

"We will make you pay!" said Hagnes looking up at the small ledge from where Runi was gloating. Runa emerged spluttering and cursing at her brother.

"Make way!" shouted Runi before they made space for him to land. As soon as he emerged the girl pushed his head down.

"No roughhousing!" called Philly as she set some towels on the side for them to dry.

"This is stupid," said Soleil sitting on a root, "we aren't kids anymore"

"Like we don't know that," Ashton said as he started to take off his shirt, "just enjoy the moment Soleil. You are turning into an old lady."

"Take that back," she said with drunken seriousness.

"Then go for a dip," he said before he went to jump off the ledge.

"How can Hagnes stand him?" Soleil turned to Philly.

"Why were you after him years ago then?" she asked back.

"He has a nice ass, what else?" she said as a matter of fact.

"Didn't need to know that," Philly said doing her best not to look towards her cousin.

"Hey Philly," Soleil called as they started to take their shirts off, "are we friends?"

Philly turned to look at her surprised, "I think so. Surprising, isn't it?"

"Crazy, more like it," she said turning away as she unbuttoned her skirt, "but we live in an island filled with dragons. It could be worse"

Philly shook her head as she laughed. Soleil always would be Soleil even after maturing somewhat.

**** Next Day ****

There was a charming little table set on the deck with parasols set all around. The dishes set were beautiful, and she could bet the food was going to be just as good, but this didn't make her feel any easier.

"Hangover?" Ashton whispered to her.

"You too?" she asked him.

"You bet," he said holding his smile back, "but it was so worth it"

"Yeah," and she allowed herself to smile as Miller and his son made their way to them. Her smile only grew more as she finally made sense of what was following them; a dragon as big as or bigger than a Nightmare.

"A Wyvernâ€|" the awe in her voice said it all. She rushed to the great creature, but stopped short when it growled at her. Kara was at her side at once protecting her, "sorry, it's just thatâ€|"

"Don't worry," said Oliver Miller, "when I saw your Nightfury I felt the same way. She is so elegant; one wouldn't think she is just as deadly"

"But she is, aren't you girl" Hagnes patted her dragon before looking at the Wyvern again.

It was a beautiful dark gold color with a thin, long face with bright blue slit eyes. It had a crest of a few spikes that were slicked back making its face look even longer. Its body was long and snake like, but thicker on its chest with copper colored spikes on the back. Its legs were bird like, much like a Nadder's, but its claws were longer. She was sure it could feel her searching eyes when it opened its wings to appease her curiosity. They were coppery colored too, like the spikes and claws. They were also wide meaning it was quite fast. Its tail ended in a double spike, which she remembered from the books

it could be used as a whip and pierce a grown man, or two if lucky.

"His name is Viper," said Oliver before they heard a small crooning. On Daniel's shoulder was a smaller red and violet Wyvern, "and that would be Roxy; my son's dragon"

"She is beautiful," Hagnes said, "both of them" but in the back of her mind she went over what she knew of the Wyverns. They were exceedingly rare and deadly too if not raised properly reason why the riders raised theirs from the moment they hatched. As they sat to talk she kept glancing at Roxy on Daniel's shoulder. The dragoness seemed to be quite taken with her owner. He would feed her of his own plate little bits before curling around his lap like a kitten.

"I think we can't afford that, right chief?" Ashton tapped her lightly on her foot to bring her attention back.

"Ehm, yesâ€|" she said with a polite smile, "we are a small island, and doing quite a few changes to adapt to our new lives. Those kinds of expenses are out of the question"

"I am afraid is not up to question. I am sure your pretty crystal dome can wait a little more to be completedâ€|" and right then Oliver knew he had crossed the line. The glare he received from the Berkerians was as intense as a raging fire, "I am sorry, it's just that we are used to going all out when it comes to the meetings"

"To show off, right?" her tone was so cold that everyone that didn't have scales in hearing range got Goosebumps; "we don't do that. We will provide with lodging, food, and other necessities, but we won't waste our resources on guests, especially if their reasons still remain dodgy"

"You do realize that you don't want to offend them,"

"Of course," she said, "and I will apologize if I do, and I am pretty sure they will understand because they also have people to look after" she left her eating utensils on the table before leaning forwards on her elbows, "and that's my final word on the subject. Now tell me about the games and this better be good because what I have heard until now has made me wonder if it would be best not to let any of your near us"

"Would you mind telling me who you heard from?"

"Carlos fromâ€|"

"The Nahuan tribe"

Hagnes knew this man didn't like her, but what gave her some hope of having someone on their side was his expression when it came to the Nahuan, or at least Carlos.

"I can assure you that man speaks too muchâ€|"

"Tell me," she said almost bearing her fangs at him with a feral smile, "now."

Miller did his best to keep his composure, "you have to understand,

these are traditionsâ€| "

"And traditions can change," she said.

"On the first dayâ€| " and he gave her the ugly truth. From her expression, he could tell she wouldn't agree to it. He didn't have a choice at her age when he learned about them, and neither would she. Of course, he didn't tell her this. The others would make her understand their own way and her bravery and strength would fade away. She would become just like the rest.

**** PAST***

Hiccup and Astrid flew over another destroyed tribe. The boys' trace was warmer now. They flew close to the remains but didn't land. Instead, they sped up after a decent night rest.

"How far does this land go?" she asked.

They looked towards the west, the direction where they always thought there would be nothing but death. The view was endless. Afar they could see hills and farther than that mountains and they only could imagine what was beyond that.

"I can't understand why would someone kill whole tribes when this land is so plentiful," Hiccup said, "is it a feud, treasuresâ€| it just doesn't make sense"

"Did Camicazi make sense?" Astrid said with a shudder.

"I guess insane people can be anywhere" Hiccup had heard of tyrants and had seen the work of one.

"In any family, like our son" she couldn't believe they had come this far to retrieve him.

"And surely you are going to blame me!" shouted Hiccup.

"You bet Haddock!"

Before he could shout back she went ahead of him.

"You don't want to play that game with me!" he shouted before going after her.

"Hiccup look!" Astrid pointed at several pillars of dark smoke that started to make their way up.

They rushed to the scene before they spotted their son wielding his shield Valhallarama and his sword Stoik in the middle of a tribe fighting three enemies at the same time. Ormarr, his dragon, was picking people up with his beak and placing them into his back before rushing out of the burning tribe and into the forest. Shikoba fought as he rode Pachua, sliding between the flaming tents and slaying enemies as he went. Sitting behind him on the Pachua was a girl with bow and arrow shooting whoever got too close.

"_Retreat!" _they heard some of them shout a word before they started to leave. Shikoba didn't stop, he went after them.

"Wait!" shouted Stein after him before he tried to follow him on foot, but only to find his path blocked by his parents, "this isn't the best time!"

"I bet, get on!" said Hiccup before helping his son at the top of Toothless, "explain in the way" and they chased on ground level trying to catch up to Shikoba. The trees' canopy was thick, so they had no other choice but to keep below the trees to be able to chase them.

"They killed his whole tribe, no! They killed almost everyone. They took his nephew and maybe other babies, and probably the babies of another tribe that was destroyed"

"We saw it, so he wants to rescue his nephew?"

"And revenge," Stein said in a lower voice hoping his father wouldn't stop right then. He knew his father would not approve.

"We will help him get his nephew back, but the rest is not up to us," he said to his son. It wasn't their battle, though he would love to get his sword through a few of those men. They found Ormarr in his return to Stein. The young warrior jumped from Toothless back to the back of his dragon as they went after them. Stein made sure to keep his eyes on Shikoba and Chepi, the girl they had found as they rode Pachua. Stein watched as Chepi shot her arrows after any drifting enemies. Then with a heavy heart as Shikoba leaned over Pachua's head and killed the enemies that Pachua caught in his mouth with his tomahawk. It was bloodshed, and though he and his parents had their mighty weapons made of dragon scales they didn't make use of them even once.

When they finally reached the camp of the enemy, they found only a few warriors remaining. Behind them, women holding two or even three babies on their arms stared at them frightened. But any pity was way gone from him. He only could see within his mind's eye his sister smiling at him as flames surrounded her like a blooming flower.

"_WHY!" _shouted Shikoba at them _"why are you doing this!"_

"_Stand back monster!"_ what they saw before them was not a man. He was bathed entirely in blood.

"_Don't come any closer!" _they knew they didn't stand a chance.

They were terrified of them, but they could see the real danger came from Shikoba, and with good reason. His eyes were filled with unquenchable hate. Shikoba got off Pachua's back and started walking towards them with only his tomahawk in hand. Many pointed shaky arrows at him, but none fired.

"_Lower your weapons!" _their leader took a step forwards to meet him
" _What must we do to appease you?" _he asked, even willing to give his life in exchange.

"_Tell meâ€|" _but Shikoba realized he didn't care for their reasons, nothing this man said would return him his family, _"you are going to pay for what you have done," _he said with his face only inches from

his, "_you are going to pay with not just your blood, but the blood of all of those you care for"__

"Get Shikoba!" shouted Stein.

"Be quiet!" he shouted back in a voice Stein had never heard him use before, "stay out of this!" then he turned to Chepi who was pointing at their enemy with a steady arrow, her eyes narrowed on them. "_Come here," _he told her before she walked to stand by his side but never lowering her weapon. _"Get them to move all the children to this side if any of them try to refuse shoot them"__

Stein felt the steady hand of his father on his shoulder as Chepi got the women moving the place the infants before Hiccup and his family before leading the women back. There were about thirty babes in total, some wailing out of hunger or other needs.

"_NO!"__ and they watched as one tried to make her way back to the babies before an arrow was embedded in her eye socket.

"_Stand back!" _shouted Chepi as the other women carried the dead one back.

"_Run," _Shikoba told the chief,_ "go back to your land, and wait, for in a few moons, I will go after all of you and burn you to ashes like you did with our homes and families"__ the chief stared at him in shock, _"didn't you hear me! I said run!"__ and they watched as both men and women scrambled back before they started running, not even bothering to take with them their dead. When he turned he saw Stein give him a hopeful smile. He thought he let them go, but when he met Hiccup's eyes he knew the Viking chief knew exactly what he was going to do, and he didn't approve.

***** To Be Continued *****

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